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SUBJECT: NORWAY HAS HIGH HOPES FOR OBAMA ADMINISTRATION

¶1. (U) Summary: Norway's political leadership enthusiastically welcomed Barack Obama's election victory and outlined some of the issues they would like the next administration to focus on. These include climate change, the financial crisis, fight against poverty, UN reform, and efforts to ensure peace and security. The election was a high interest topic with three GON Ministers in the U.S. during the election (Energy, Culture, and Environment). The GON does expect movement on issues such as climate but is also aware that the new administration will also be pressing allies on contributions to Afghanistan as well. End Summary.

PM Stresses U.S. ties and positive cooperation

¶2. (U) While careful to stress that the GON would have cooperated with both candidates, PM Stoltenberg clearly indicated that the Obama administration is more likely to share the same goals as the GON. Commenting on the election, Stoltenberg said that President-elect Obama would enhance bilateral cooperation, particularly in areas such as climate change, disarmament, and UN reforms. Stoltenberg took pains to say that the U.S. is Norway's most important ally, and that bilateral links are strong and based on common values and interests, not a particular administration. Stoltenberg called on the U.S. to show international leadership to achieve a climate agreement. Perhaps hoping to bolster his upcoming election campaign, Stoltenberg was impressed by the way Obama unified voters in all groups and by the way both campaigns mobilized voters.

FM lays out his priorities for the new administration

¶3. (U) FM Stoere also welcomed the election results, saying that Obama's message of unity and hope is parallel to the Norwegian Labor Party's message. Cautioning that President Obama will face huge challenges, Stoere said that America will not change course overnight and that Obama will ultimately be judged by the way he handles Iraq and Afghanistan, trade issues and environmental policy. To help the new administration set its priorities properly, Stoere suggested the following steps:

--The U.S. must lead in the fight for human values, a classless society, human rights, democracy, and international law.

--The U.S. must lead in facing the main international challenges, namely the financial crisis, climate change, energy supply, economic stability, technology development, trade liberalization, fighting poverty, and uncontrolled migration.

--The U.S. must lead through long-term diplomacy, not short-term military solutions

--The U.S. must lead in reforming the UN and other international organizations, particularly in how to integrate China, India, South Africa and Brazil.

¶4. (U) Stoere highlighted climate change as the main challenge, saying that even Afghanistan is short-term by comparison. Stoere acknowledged that Obama may ask for more troops for Afghanistan, but did not say how Norway would respond. He also mentioned that while relations with the

Bush Administration had been "tidy" he expects relations with the new Secretary of State to be good. Perhaps inadvertently explaining the "tidy" comment, Stoere stated that "it has been registered that the Bush Administration never had time to meet with PM Stoltenberg."

High Hopes for the environment and climate

15. (U) Environment and Development Minister Erik Solheim was one of three GON Ministers in the U.S. during the election. Solheim had close ties to the Obama campaign. Upon his return to Oslo he wrote a full page editorial in a leading newspaper explaining how the U.S. will be much more active on addressing climate change. Solheim praised Obama's linkage of energy security with climate change and cited Obama's pledge to reduce emissions by 80 percent by 2050, and dramatically invest in alternative energy.

WHITNEY